

Bloomington Community Farmers' Market Advisory Council

Monday, December 4, 2017 at 5:30 pm

The Inkwell, 105. N. College

Advisory Council Members Present

Kathy Aiken, Bobbi Boos, Bruce McCallister, Rachel Rosolina, Mary White

Public Present

none

Market/City Staff Present

Marcia Veldman, Kiran Singh, Robin Kitowski

1. Call to Order

Kathy called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of Minutes

The October minutes were approved.

3. Public Comment none

4. Old Business none

5. New Business

A. Review Vendor and Customer Attendance

Robin presented 2017 attendance data, this year in a format that showed a comparative graphed history since 2013.

April weather was poor overall, which had a predictable result on customer counts. Saturday customer attendance was a record high 224,961 over the entire Market season. November numbers were second highest in 5 most recent years, buoyed by a very strong first market and Holiday Market. A Fair of the Arts crowds are not counted by Robin, but Crystal reported that an average of 1300 people are counted on the Plaza on those days during the concurrent event.

Vendor counts on Saturday were slightly less than April, 2016. May-October showed third highest in the past five years. Saturdays vendors overall were down an average of 147 vendors from the high in 2013 of 2525. More opportunities to sell at new Markets is a big contributor to this decrease, not lack of interest in attending Markets on the part of vendors. Non producer-only markets, or markets with more flexible rules, may draw down some vendor numbers as well. Bruce posited the capacity for our site has reached a possible plateau. Rainy Saturdays numbered seven.

Tuesday customer attendance was 3300, in the low average range for the five year period. There were quite a few new vendors in 2017 adding to the 250 count for the year, the second highest in the five year period. In 2016, a consistent method for counting the vendors was not used, which is different from 2017. This accounts for the apparent doubling of vendors in 2017 since 2016. A consistent approach to these counts will continue going forward. Robin said there were more varied vendors at the Tuesday Market, like Kind Kombucha, Sazon, Wild Alaska, houseplants.

B. Review Plans for Switchyard Development

Marcia presented the most updated plans for the \$31 million dollar project. Project will be bid out in March with bids due in May. When utilities work is done on the site,

Switchyard work can begin and is anticipated to be complete by late 2019. Marcia covered the features of the north end of the park including the Police Department substation, various courts, and accessible community gardens. Event lawns, a skate park, engineered day-lighted streams, and partially pervious pavers in parking area are additional features. The highlight is a pavilion with a smaller outdoor concert space. This LEED certified building will be available for rent for public events. There is a splash pad, state-of-the-art accessible playground, a bosque, and a stage and lawn larger than Third St. Park. Affordable housing is sited nearby. 400 parking spaces in three different lots on site. Kathy asked if a Market will go in the pavilion. Marcia said maybe in 2020 there could be a weekday Market. Staff hopes plans for food truck hook ups will be fulfilled. Bobbi asked about the possibility of Winter Market moving in to the pavilion. Marcia indicated this is a concept still in play for the future. Most of the landscaping will be focused on native plants. This park will feature buried powerlines, wifi throughout, and will be under camera surveillance.

Bruce asked about an alternative Saturday Market event at the Switchyard, noting how he would hate to see the Showers site market diluted. Some discussion ensued about how a smaller Market will have appeal to people for whom the downtown Market is too much in terms of parking, time, crowd levels, etc.

B. General Discussions on Market Development

Marcia invited the group to discuss one thing they would change about the Market. Bobbi expressed that she hopes that her fellow vendors would be more considerate of each other and not become grumpy around competition with other vendors who grow the same thing. Kathy supported the idea of some pre-season salesmanship skills for vendors. Bobbi knew of on-line webinars that dealt with that material. Marcia mentioned the Growing for Market periodical had a feature to this effect that she shared with vendors. It was well-received and had value for a long-time vendor. In the new vendor acceptance letter, staff includes links to tips for selling at Market. Bobbi suggested Amy Thompson could be a resource for this type of support information. Marcia said a skills workshop could be held in conjunction with the space reservation meeting. Having a vendor map written large for the public (that is the same as the one for the lottery) with magnetic tags may help streamline staff, vendor, and customer experience with identifying usage of spaces.

Marcia mentioned that except for Mary, all FMAC spots turn over in 2018. Only Bobbi is now on her third term and thus ineligible to serve on the Council for one year. Applications for FMAC are due on February 1. Marcia will send those and the meeting schedule for next year.

6. Adjournment

Minutes submitted by Robin Kitowski